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PATENT

Docket No. 199372001800

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In the application of:

Akira KOGUCHI

Serial No.: 09/611,635

Filing Date: July 7, 2000

For: CONTAINER HANDLING SYSTEM
FOR SUBSTRATE PROCESSING
APPARATUS AND METHOD OF
HANDLING CONTAINERS

Examiner: Jeffery A. Shapiro

Group Art Unit: 3653

Notice of Allowance Mailing Date:
February 13, 2004

Confirmation No.: 6463

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE
STATEMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.97

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GROUP 3600

Mail Stop RCE
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Dear Sir:

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.97 and § 1.98, Applicant submits for consideration in the above-identified application the document listed on the attached Form PTO-1449 (Iwama). A copy of the publication is also submitted herewith. The Examiner is requested to make this document of record.

The application contains only two independent claims, 24 and 28. Both independent claims have been amended to include the limitation that the stages have a cut-away area and "a clearance area extending from the cut-away area to one end of the first stage." This amendment was suggested by the Examiner to clarify that the cut-away area was not an isolated opening in the stage, but rather that the opening extended all the way to one end of the stage (see FIG. 7 of

the application). Iwama only discloses an isolated opening in a table 111 (see FIG. 2 of Iwama), and does not disclose, teach or suggest an opening that extends to one end of the table.

Claims 24 and 28 were also amended to include the limitation of a sensing device coupled to the movable table for scanning or sensing a condition of the substrates in the container as the movable table is moved in a direction perpendicular to the substrates (see reference characters 61 and 62 in FIG. 7 of the application). The Examiner determined that none of the cited references disclosed this limitation. Iwama also contains no disclosure at all regarding a sensor for sensing the condition of the substrates, and thus does not disclose, teach or suggest this limitation.

Claims 24 and 28 include the limitation of a turning mechanism (see reference character 51 in FIG. 6 of the application) as part of a table moving mechanism. Iwama only discloses a moving mechanism and conveyor machine (see reference characters 115 and 120 in FIG. 2 of Iwama) that move in either a horizontal or vertical direction, and does not disclose, teach or suggest an mechanism that is able to turn or rotate the moving mechanism or conveyor machine.

Claims 24 and 28 were further amended to include the limitation that the cut-away areas be "shaped and sized so that the sensing device has uninterrupted access to the substrates as the movable table moves in a direction perpendicular to the substrates." The Examiner determined that none of the cited references disclosed this limitation. As mentioned above, Iwama contains no disclosure at all regarding a sensor for sensing the condition of the substrates, and thus does not disclose, teach or suggest this limitation.

Therefore, the Applicant respectfully submits that claims 24 and 28 are patentable over Iwama alone or in combination with the previously identified references. In addition, because all of the pending dependent claims depend from claims 24 and 28, it is submitted that all pending claims are patentable and in condition for allowance.

This Information Disclosure Statement is submitted with the RCE application:

- ☐ Within three months of the application filing date or before receipt of a first Office Action on the merits; accordingly, no fee or separate requirements are required.
- ☐ After receipt of a first Office Action on the merits but before a final Office Action or Notice of Allowance.
 - ☐ A fee is required. The Commissioner is authorized to charge \$180.00 fee to Deposit Account No. 03-1952. A Fee Transmittal Form for FY 2002 is enclosed in duplicate.
 - ☐ A Certification under 37 C.F.R. § 1.97(e) is provided below; accordingly, no fee is believed to be due.
- ☐ After receipt of a final Office Action or Notice of Allowance, but before payment of the issue fee. Accordingly, a Petition requesting consideration of the Information Disclosure Statement, an authorization to charge our deposit account, and a Certification under 37 C.F.R. § 1.97(e) are provided herein.

Applicant would appreciate the Examiner initialing and returning the Form PTO-1449, indicating that the information has been considered and made of record herein.

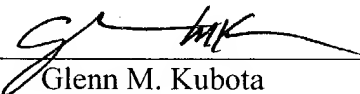
This Information Disclosure Statement under 37 C.F.R. § 1.97 is not to be construed as a representation that: (i) a complete search has been made; (ii) additional information material to the examination of this application does not exist; (iii) the information, protocols, results and the like reported by third parties are accurate or enabling; or (iv) the above information constitutes prior art to the subject invention.

In the unlikely event that the transmittal letter is separated from this document and the Patent Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, Applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Director to charge the cost of

such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to **Deposit**
Account No. 03-1952 referencing 199372001800. However, the
Director is not authorized to charge the cost of the issue fee to the Deposit Account.

Dated: March 31, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

By: 
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Form PTO-1449

Docket Number 199372002000

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INFORMATION DISCLOSURE CITATION
ON AN APPLICATION

Applicant

Akira KOGUCHI

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Group Art Unit: 3653

Mailing Date: March 31, 2004

(Use several sheets if necessary)

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

Examiner Initials	Ref. No.	Date	Document No.	Name	Class	Subclass	Filing Date If Appropriate
	1.	04/14/1998	5,740,053	T. Iwama			

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

Examiner Initials	Ref. No.	Date	Document No.	Country	Class	Subclass	Translation YES NO

OTHER DOCUMENTS

(including author, title, Date, Pertinent Pages, Etc.)

Examiner Initials	Ref. No.	Title

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EXAMINER: (examiner)

DATE CONSIDERED:

EXAMINER: Initial if citation considered, whether or not the citation conforms with MPEP 609. Draw a line through the citation if not in conformance and not considered. Include a copy of this form with next communication to applicant.